

IN THE CLAIMS

The listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Claims 1-24. (cancelled)

25. (currently amended) A probe for use with an introducer in a patient having a vessel carrying blood to ascertain characteristics of the blood comprising a cannula having proximal and distal extremities, the distal extremity of the cannula being adapted to be inserted into the vessel of the patient, a gas sensor assembly disposed in the distal extremity of the cannula for providing an electrical signal when the cannula is disposed in the blood and a connector ~~provided on~~carried by the proximal extremity of the cannula whereby the distal extremity of the cannula is adapted for slidable travel through the introducer when inserting the cannula into the vessel, the cannula and connector having a size which permits the introducer to be slid off of the proximal extremity of the cannula and the connector after the distal extremity of the cannula has been inserted into the vessel.

26. (original) The probe of Claim 25 in combination with the introducer.

27. (original) The probe of Claim 25 wherein the introducer is a needle.

28. (original) The probe of Claim 25 wherein the connector has a cylindrical portion and has an electrical contact extending around at least a portion of the cylindrical portion, a conductor extending from the electrical contact to the gas sensor assembly.

29. (original) The probe of Claim 28 wherein the electrical contact is seated flush with the cylindrical portion so as to provide the connector with a substantially smooth cylindrical surface.

Claims 30-55. (cancelled)

56. (new) The probe of Claim 25 further comprising a flex circuit extending through at least a portion of the cannula, the flex circuit having proximal and distal portions with first and second electrodes formed on the distal portion and first and second conductors extending from the proximal portion to the first and second electrodes, the first and second electrodes and the first and second conductors forming at least part of the gas sensor assembly.

57. (new) The probe of Claim 56 further comprising an electrolyte solution disposed in the distal extremity of the cannula in the vicinity of the first and second electrodes.

58. (new) The probe of Claim 57 wherein the cannula is provided with a sealed chamber in which the first and second electrodes are located, the electrolyte solution being disposed in the sealed chamber.

59. (new) The probe of Claim 58 wherein the cannula is provided with an additional sealed chamber in which third and fourth electrodes are located, the electrolyte solution being disposed in the additional sealed chamber.

60. (new) The probe of Claim 56 wherein at least part of the proximal portion of the flex circuit serves as the connector.

61. (new) The probe of Claim 56 wherein the flex circuit has an exposed surface, the first and second electrodes each being a pad formed on the exposed surface.

62. (new) The probe of Claim 56 further comprising adhesive disposed within the cannula for securing the flex circuit within the cannula.

63. (new) The probe of Claim 25 wherein the cannula is gas permeable in the vicinity of the gas sensor assembly.

64. (new) The probe of Claim 63 wherein the entire cannula is made of a gas permeable material.

65. (new) The probe of Claim 64 wherein the gas permeable material is polymethylpentene.

66. (new) The probe of Claim 25 wherein the connector has a cylindrical portion and an electrical contact extending around at least a portion of the cylindrical portion, a conductor extending through the probe for electrically coupling the gas sensor assembly with the electrical contact, the electrical contact being seated flush with the cylindrical portion so as to provide the connector with a substantially smooth cylindrical surface.

67. (new) The probe of Claim 66 further comprising an additional electrical contact extending around at least a portion of the cylindrical portion and spaced apart from the first-named electrical contact.

68. (new) The probe of Claim 66 in combination with a display module having a display connector for mating with the connector of the probe, the connector and the display connector permitting connection and disconnection between the probe and the display module.

69. (new) The probe of Claim 68 further comprising a band connected to the display module for securing the display module to the wrist of the patient.